

Taking Care--Documenting the Occupational Culture of Home Care Workers
Archie Green Fellows Project, 2014-2015
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Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Alice Redding interviews, 2014-11-21 and 2015-03-04: interviews conducted
by Helen Marie Moss and Donald Eugene Stacy**

INTERVIEW LOG

PART 1: 11/21/14 Portland, Oregon

00:00:00 Pre-interview: chatting, housekeeping and forms.

00:02:44 From East Coast, lived in lots of places. Now Lives in Rainier, Oregon.

00:03:32 Been a home care worker 14 years, works with clients who are physically unable and seniors, some with mental, 2 -3 clients.

00:04:40 Fell into it - word of mouth, ended up working with State.

00:05:15 Have to be patient, caring, understanding. Let them do what they want to do.

00:06:12 I learned being around other people, cared for father and mother, a natural gift I was blessed with, but did home care commission classes, gives examples of the classes. Wonderful classes.

00:07:45 Typical workday - you have a routine, look around at what needs to be done, any special requests. Just being there for them, helping them out making sure the place looks nice.

00:09:15 You get close, how could you not? (Cause you stress?) Not really, they have to know that after hours I have a life. They get lonesome and they need us, but we have to set boundaries.

00:11:11 Story about falling asleep driving home after helping someone at night. Glad I was there for her, but pushed myself too far. Did what I had to do. Other clients have called late in the evening. So rewarding when they say "so glad you are here."

00:13:12 Other jobs: McDonald's, Target, pre-school teacher, gas attendant, cleaning houses before senior services. Volunteer for special reading, loved working with kids, with other people; at McDonald's did birthday parties - it was so much fun.

00:14:00 Caregiving is different because focus is on one person, more personal. The others are just jobs. More rewarding, feel more needed.

00:15:00 Regional meetings, trainings, we have a way of connecting. (Special things you talk about?) Talk about issues we have, and help each other. What is going on, I am union rep so look up to me. Chit chat about everything, but mostly issues; we are going to bargaining soon. Encourage them to participate, phone banks, rallies.

00:17:00 Very important to have a sense of humor, cause it is stressful sometimes. It makes the client's feel better. Breaks their mood from negative to positive.

00:17:49 Most gratifying - being there, helping, keeping them in their homes, giving them independence, they love it. I say "Do you what you can do and I'll fill in the gaps".

00:18:45 Most challenging? - when you are in a bad mood or you say something and they take it the wrong way, just don't take it personal. It's hard sometimes.

00:19:46 How has the union made a difference? Given me a structure, a reason; encouraged me to be a leader. I am a voice for my clients, my home care workers, helped me grow. Some challenges - talking to senators, organized rallies, orientations, regional meetings. I am getting so that I am not afraid. They see the good in people and bring it out.

00:22:11 One thing public should know: my job is helping stay in their homes, keeping them out of nursing homes.

00:23:30 Community perceives you? I have a small community - when they find out what I do they say, "that's great".

00:24:00 (Anything else?) Important to make sure you are compatible with the client during the interview. Ask each other questions. Know where each other are coming from, feel comfortable. I have had situations. Set boundaries.

00:25:30 Got involved in the union in 2006, started by going to meetings, then canvassed for the elections in 2010, each time you learn and grow. Hard to knock on doors at first, and talking to people, now easy. Learned from union and clients. A year or so left and I am going to make the most of it.

00:27:17 Ways benefit? Learning to not take things personally, clients teaching me their ways, two-way street. It is wonderful - I help them, they help me.

00:28:33 Chatting about the video.

00:29:58 End of PART 1

PART 2: 3/4/15 Rainier, Oregon

00:00:23 We talked about church where we are doing the second interview, been going to church for 30 years, lived in Rainier for 46 years, was in the Marines, talks about her husband and family, living in a small town.

00:02:05 Honored to be a leader in the union, union is a good share of her life, without them would not have benefits.

00:02:45 Clients in Rainier, excited for her to do interview.

00:03:51 (dealing with heater noise)

00:04:41 (homecare workers everywhere in state - peer group?) Yes, regional meetings. All connect, do "door knocks" get to know each other. Did not know the other people before the union, did not know about home care. Just had a meeting in Astoria. Also phone calls and internet.

00:06:55 Talks about husband being a marine and going to Vietnam. Proud of him. Talks about church, loves to sing.

00:07:45 Hobbies and things she likes to do. Loves the outdoor activities of the area.

00:09:10 End of interview.